

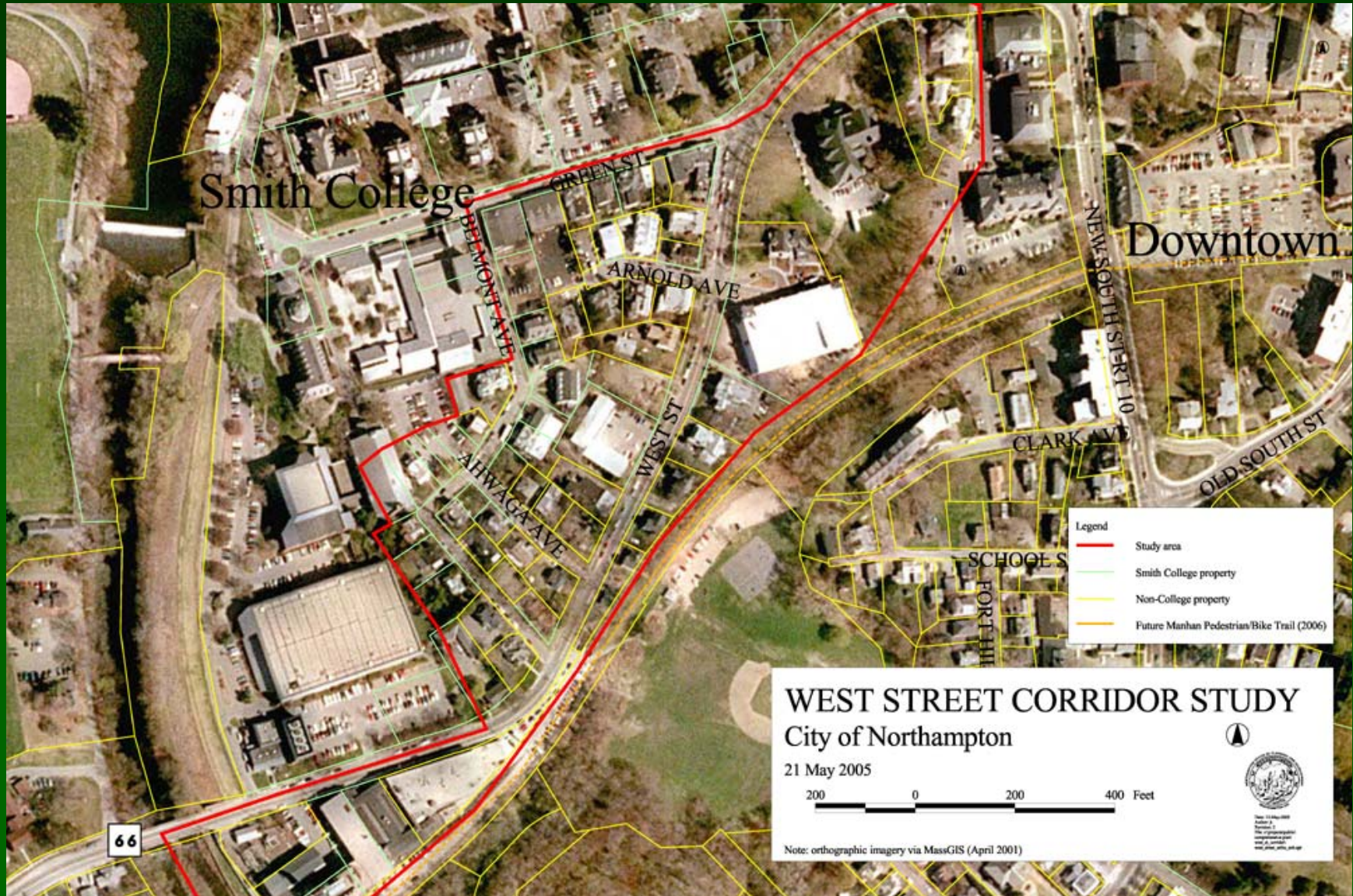
# *The Future of West Street*

**NORTHAMPTON COMMUNITY WORKSHOP | 21 MAY 2005**





# The West Street Corridor Study Area



# What are the issues?

- What should be the character of the West Street Corridor?
  - Appropriate uses (residential, business and college) at street level and above
  - Urban design strategies to support the desired character
- Smith College expansion needs and existing land uses
- Connecting downtown Northampton with the Village at Hospital Hill

# Purpose of this workshop

- Identify a range of workable uses and design options for the West Street corridor
- Identify elements of a process to create more predictability for the future
- Contribute to a West Street Corridor/Neighborhood Plan

# Goody Clancy role

- Asked by the City of Northampton to
  - Meet with representatives of the groups involved in the Green Street/Smith College Ad Hoc Working Group
  - Structure and facilitate a workshop on the future of the West Street Corridor Study Area for Northampton residents and other stakeholders
  - Provide a range of options to spark discussion
  - Report on the results of the workshop
  - Provide recommendations to the City for the Plan



# Previous planning discussions in the corridor study area

- The Green Street/Smith College Ad Hoc Working Group
  - Focus on Smith plans to build an engineering/science campus precinct in the Green Street/West Street area
  - Eight meetings, April-July 2004, discussed design principles and impact mitigation
  - Review and comment period
  - Three meetings, December 2004-March 2005
  - Final Report including
    - Areas of agreement and disagreement
    - Desire for May 21 workshop—supported by city, college, neighborhood

# Agreed-upon goals from the Ad Hoc Group Report

- Smith will build a state-of-the-art science/engineering complex
- No net loss of housing units within walking distance of downtown, especially affordable units.
- Relocation assistance and the opportunity to be relocated within walking distance of downtown for existing tenants.
- New construction to be developed comprehensively and in relation to citywide planning goals.
- Changes to the area should respect the maintenance of an active, mixed-use and diverse neighborhood accessible to and from the campus.
- Non-academic mixed-use development will be consistent with market demand.

# Priority design principles from the Ad Hoc Group Report

- Incorporate **smart growth** principles
- **Minimize impact** of expansion on neighborhood uses
- West Street should be a **vibrant, mixed-use area** with commercial, residential and college uses
- Ensure **integration** of the new science and engineering buildings into the surrounding area
- Ensure **adequate parking** and **pedestrian safety**
- **Integrate building and landscape design** with the campus, streetscape, and neighborhood
- Create and publicize a plan for **construction mitigation**





# Study area characteristics

- Estimated 260 residents (2000 census)
- 216 residential units, including:
  - 7 single-family (4 college-owned)
  - 206 apartments (84 college-owned)
  - 15 SRO units
- Approximately 30,000 square feet of commercial space (including vacant former college bookstore but not including the Felt Building)

# Future changes

- Long-term college plans for three engineering and sciences buildings totaling 400,000 square feet between Green Street and West Street
- First building (Building A)
  - 136,000 SF sited along Belmont Avenue
  - Four residential buildings with 26 units to be demolished
  - One business to be displaced
  - No effect on West Street frontage
- Village at Hospital Hill redevelopment of state hospital a mile from downtown along West Street:
  - About 400,000 SF of commercial and industrial space
  - About 200 housing units





## ENGINEERING & SCIENCE BUILDING A

(graphics courtesy Smith College)

# Smith College interests

- Create a multidisciplinary engineering and science academic precinct.
- Create a contiguous campus with significant open space.
- Retain a defined campus-community edge while remaining open to the community.
- File Building A proposal with the Planning Board in June.



# Replacement housing and other assistance

- 26 demolished housing units to be replaced near downtown
- 36 Bedford Terrace ( now college housing) to be redeveloped to provide community housing units
- Smith fund of \$3 million to help create affordable units
- Majority of 36 Bedford Terrace units to be permanently affordable



## Replacement housing and other assistance—*continued*

- Displaced tenants from Building A site to be offered units, regardless of income eligibility for affordable units, if needed
- Business-relocation assistance provided on a case-by-case, negotiated basis.



**36 BEDFORD TERRACE IS LOCATED  
NEAR NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL.**

# City interests

- Retain a commercial presence on West Street
- No net loss in tax base
- No net loss in housing units (especially affordable units)
- No significant loss in commercial space
- Assistance with residential and business relocation
- Create a new vibrant mixed-use corridor from Hospital Hill down West Street to Elm



***WEST/GREEN STREET BUSINESSES ATTRACT SOME DESTINATION CUSTOMERS.***

# Resident and business interests

- Avoid loss of rental housing by reorienting Building A and relocating businesses in ground-floor spaces in the building
- Ensure replacement of any lost housing units before issuance of building permits
- Assistance in relocating Green Street businesses
- Ensure appropriate transitions between large buildings and smaller-scale buildings



**RESIDENT PROPOSAL FOR  
LOCATION OF BUILDING A.**



# Urban design conditions on West Street

- South (“Library”) side:
  - Most buildings are residential in style if not use.
  - Wide setbacks from street.
  - Rise in elevation from street.
  - Abrupt drop in elevation behind garage and adjacent buildings.





# Urban design conditions on West Street

- North (“hot tub”) side:
  - Business buildings built to sidewalk
  - Residential buildings with front setbacks



# Urban design conditions on West Street

- North (“hot tub”) side —*continued*:
  - Some front setbacks paved for parking without curb cut
  - Some buildings above sidewalk elevation



# Design character of West Street

What should West Street look like?

# Future character of West Street: What are the key design factors?

- Streetscape
  - Sidewalk
  - Street trees
  - Setback to buildings (treatment/dimensions?)
  - Definition of property line (fence/railing?)
  - Curb cuts
- Buildings
  - Size (large/smaller)
  - Character (institutional/residential/other)
  - Materials
  - Ground-floor use
  - Ground-floor design
  - Entrance (from street/campus)

# Creating an attractive street edge

- Welcoming entrances
- Well-defined and -maintained landscape





# Creating an attractive street edge

- Research and residential
- Old and new
- Large and small
- Buildings and open space



# Creating an attractive street edge

- Attractive and welcoming entrance
- Well-landscaped setback
- Taller building setback





# Creating an attractive street edge

Ground-floor retail  
incorporated in lab  
building



# West Street Corridor scenarios

- **Scenario 1:** Campus edge on Hot Tub side and commercial edge on Library side of West Street
- **Scenario 2:** Mixed-use edge on Hot Tub side
- **Scenario 3:** Mixed-use corner at Green/West
- **Scenario 4:** Existing commercial/residential edge continues and academic construction includes site of parking lots on campus side of Green Street

# Scenario 1: Campus edge on Hot Tub side side/commercial edge on Library side

- College properties on the Library side of West Street are sold, redeveloped as private commercial properties.
- Library side of West Street between downtown and the Felt Building is rezoned commercial to promote retail uses.
- Creates more commercial connection from Hospital Hill to downtown





# Scenario 2: Mixed-use edge on Hot Tub side

- Street-level retail uses included in new buildings with other uses above (academic, office, housing).
- At least one science building is designed to accommodate ground-floor retail on the hot tub side of West Street.



# Scenario 3: Mixed-use corner at Green/West

- Ground-floor retail uses in a multistory building with other uses above (possibly part of the science complex)
  - new construction or
  - construction around existing buildings
- Strong presence to hold the corner
- Gateway/link to downtown along West Street



# Scenario 4: Academic construction in parking lots on north side of Green Street

- West Street commercial/residential edge continues.
- College parking lot on north side of Green Street included in siting of new buildings, with parking relocated elsewhere on campus.
- Limited surface parking provided for businesses.



# Small group discussions

- Discuss desirable character of future West Street.
- Identify the advantages and disadvantages of each scenario and the elements of a common urban design and planning approach:
  - design character of West Street
  - physical relationship of Smith College to the city
  - Smith College proposed Engineering and Science Center
  - West Street/Green Street businesses and viability of future businesses
  - West Street/Green Street residences
- Identify elements of an improved communications and planning framework for future development along the corridor.



# Small group discussions

An opportunity to

- listen to all points of view
- consider a variety of planning options in the broad context of the West Street Corridor, encompassing the Green Street area
- advance from the Ad Hoc Report to
  - create a new basis to plan for and shape change in the study area
  - create new understandings about how to share information and make decisions in future planning for the study area

# Next steps for the West Street Corridor/Neighborhood Plan

- Goody Clancy report
  - Workshop process and results
  - Independent recommendations on substance and process